

SONY OPEN

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RAIN DISLODGES MEDICAL WASTE



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A worker filled trash bags yesterday as teams hauled away debris — including medical waste — that flowed onto the Ko Olina Resort from the Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill after this week's rain.

Needles and vials foul beaches after storm water hits a landfill, leading a state official to say it "should never have happened"

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Roger and Colleen Mehrer surveyed the muddy water at Ko Olina and watched as workers hauled away plastic bags of trash that had made its way from Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill above Farrington Highway.

The part-time Ko Olina residents did not see what was inside the bags, but

they had read in yesterday's Star-Advertiser about the medical waste that had washed ashore at the West Oahu resort's lagoons and elsewhere along the Leeward Coast.

"How can medical supplies wash from the dump all the way down here?" Roger Mehrer said. "That's what surprised me."

Gary Gill, state deputy health director for environmental health, said, "Obviously, this situation should never have happened."

Rain accumulating at a reservoir above Oahu's only municipal landfill poured into a "cell" of waste, causing it to overflow and send a torrent of debris-laden storm water down a concrete

spillway and into waters just off the Ko Olina Resort on Wednesday, said officials with the city and Waste Management Inc., the company that operates the landfill.

Medical waste, including syringes and vials that appeared to contain blood, were among the debris that washed ashore along beaches at Ko Olina's four lagoons and other western shores, including the area around Kalaheo Harbor.

Gill said his agency was still compiling data on the waste that washed ashore and testing water quality samples from different points along the

Please see Waste, A6

HOW IT HAPPENED

Heavy rain initiated a chain of events that led to a spill of medical waste-laden water into the ocean:

- 1 Water from a large reservoir above the Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill overflowed, pouring into a cell, or a section filled with waste.
- 2 The cell overflowed, sending debris-laden storm water into a drainage way along the landfill's Waianae-side border.
- 3 The drain emptied into a filtration basin at the bottom of the landfill, just mauka of Farrington Highway.
- 4 The basin overflowed, sending water and debris pouring into three storm water drainage pipes that pass under the highway and onto Ko Olina Resort property.
- 5 Water and debris entered the ocean from the three storm drains near the northern border of Ko Olina.



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